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# THE REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY OF TURKEY: A REVIEW OF BANSE'S WORK \*

By ELLEN CHURCHILL SEMPLE

[With separate map, Pl. VI, facing page 350]

Turkey lies at the junction of three continents. It is thrust in between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, between the Black Sea and the Red. It bridges the space between the Balkan Peninsula and Persia, between Persia and Egypt. It is a great isthmian region, dominating the chief intercontinental trade routes of the eastern hemisphere. It flanks for a thousand miles the steamer highway of the Suez Canal and Red Sea. It controls the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus leading to the Black Sea lands. It is crossed by old caravan tracks and the future railroad routes connecting the Mediterranean and Black Sea ports with the Persian Gulf coast. It therefore holds a highly strategic position.

By reason of its location, Turkey has drawn the elements of its population from the grasslands of Semitic Arabia, from the highlands of Aryan Persia, from the Caspian plains of Mongolian Asia, from the multifarious race stocks of the Russian Caucasus, from the Greek coasts of the Balkan Peninsula and Aegean Isles. These it has assimilated more or less to the indigenous Hittite or Alarodian race. The peoples comprised within the borders of Turkey differ in racial and geographic origin, in language and religion, in social and economic development. On the other hand they are united by certain common bonds found in the semiarid climate of Turkey, the prevailing steppe vegetation with its concomitant, pastoral-nomadic life, the patchy distribution of the arable land, the sparsity of the population, and finally the deep underlying community of ideals molded by this environment through a process of social development unfolded from within through the ages. To these may be added the religion of Islam and the fanatical devotion of its adherents, who here number five-sixths of the people.

## Anatolia, or Asia Minor

The Anatolian Peninsula stretches like a bridge between southwestern Asia and southeastern Europe. It consists of a high plateau, increasing in altitude towards the east, and rimmed on its three seaward sides by young mountains rising boldly from the coast. Structurally and racially it is part of Asia. Its wide steppe interior has been a passway for Asiatic migrations,

\* Ewald Banse: *Die Türkei: Eine Moderne Geographie.* 3rd edit. 454 pp.; map, illus., bibliogr., index. Georg Westermann, Brunswick, 1919. 10 x 6½ inches.

The spelling of place names in this article is for the most part in accord with the Royal Geographical Society's system. On the general question see the note on the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names in the record section of this number of the *Review*.—EDIT. NOTE.

but the massive mountain barriers which trace the northern and southern coasts have excluded oversea immigrants from Europe and thus maintained the Asiatic solidarity of the peninsula. Only the Aegean front, with its deeply embayed coast and its structural valleys opening westward, has been hospitable to Hellenic colonization and European influences.

The rain-bearing winds from the neighboring seas expend their moisture on the outer slopes of the coast ranges (rainfall 600 to 1,000 mm.) and reach the interior impoverished. Hence the plateau core has an arid climate, extensive steppes or saline wastes where nomads pasture their herds, mountains bare or thinly covered by a scrubby growth of trees on the high inland slopes, and shallow U-shaped valleys drained by meager streams which serve to irrigate strips of tillage land along the interior piedmont. The coast ranges get ample precipitation for winter grain crops along their lower slopes, where the typical Mediterranean vegetation prevails, and they have abundant water to irrigate in summer the orchards and gardens of the deltaic plains or valley lowlands at their base. On their upper slopes they support a magnificent belt of forests, which averages 60 miles in breadth and comprises one-third of Anatolia's area.

### THE MARMARA COAST LANDS

The Marmara region comprises the indented coast lands encircling the Sea of Marmara and the Straits—namely, eastern Thrace, the Troad, Lesser Phrygia, and Bithynia. It belongs both to the Mediterranean and Pontic climatic provinces and combines the vegetation appropriate to each. Thrace is a Quaternary plain, screened on the north by low mountains which partly fend off the moist winds from the Black Sea and give Thrace a steppe vegetation more suggestive of Asia than of Europe. Cultivated fields and orchards are distributed along its valley floors, especially in the moist lowland of the Maritsa River. The Asiatic half of the Marmara region, owing to the disposition of the mountain ranges in successive tiers well back from the Pontic shore, is accessible to the Black Sea winds and gets ample rain (800 mm.) over most of its area. Agricultural products in great variety—grains, olive oil, wines, linseed, flax, cotton, opium, sesame, and mulberry trees for sericulture—are raised along the seaward slopes, while the valleys in the rain shadow are either cultivated by irrigation or afford pasturage for cattle. Oak and fir forests on the high ranges attest the influence of the Pontic winds.

Constantinople, intercontinental capital, holds the head of the Anatolian bridge and controls the marine highway of the Bosphorus.

### NORTHERN ANATOLIA

Pontic Anatolia comprises the northern mountain zone of the peninsula. Its relief consists of steep-sided horsts, dissected into mountain chains, which rise directly from the coast and increase in elevation from west to

east. The rugged littoral has few ports and difficult hinterland connections. The region is distinguished by its Pontic climate, characterized by ample precipitation all year round on the seaward slopes, though west of Samsun the rainfall shows a marked summer minimum. Eastward precipitation increases from 727 millimeters at Samsun to 875 millimeters at Trebizond and 2,500 millimeters at Batum. Behind the mountains it declines rapidly to 400 millimeters on the margin of the interior plateau. Dense forests of conifers and deciduous trees on the rainy seaward slopes support a big lumber industry. Sawmills on the perennial torrents convert the logs into planks, which are exported through Samsun, Sinope, and Trebizond to Mediterranean markets. The subregion of Paphlagonia and the adjacent district of Djanik in eastern Pontus are distinguished by longitudinal valleys near the coast, which contain long bands of settlements and farms, and carry the only roads parallel to the littoral in all this region. Djanik has the only fairly good ports (including Samsun) and the only fertile deltaic plains. Lazistan, a narrow zone of lofty forested mountains stamped with isolation, is crossed by the caravan route from Persia and Armenia to Trebizond, *entrepot* for a large plateau hinterland.

#### THE PLATEAU INTERIOR

The central region is characterized above all by its dry plateau character. The rain falls chiefly in spring, when it provides temporary pasturage for the Turcoman and Kurdish nomads. The zone of settlements, dependent upon irrigation streams, is fairly broad in northern Cappadocia and Galatia, where the old folded ranges derive some rain (350 mm.) from the Pontic winds; but it is narrow in the south, where the Taurus rampart excludes the Levantine winds. The desert core of the plateau nearly coincides with the province of Lycaonia, which gets only 200 millimeters of rain annually. In the Konia plain, however, German enterprise in 1912 reclaimed 100,000 acres of land by irrigation works which tapped the Isaurian lakes in the Taurus Mountains. In eastern Cappadocia the great volcanic mass of Mt. Erdjias (13,317 feet) forms a climatic island with a local precipitation of 800 millimeters, chiefly in the form of snow which lingers on the summit late in summer. Its streams irrigate a belt of fields and gardens planted in the tufaceous soil about its base and maintain numerous villages and towns, chief of which is Kaisariya. Phrygia, the western province, is a highland of good pastures and arable valleys because it is fairly accessible to the Aegean winds which here penetrate through gaps into the interior and bring 400 to 500 millimeters of rain.

#### WESTERN ANATOLIA

This region embraces the Aegean front of Asia Minor. Its highly articulated coast and its valleys of subsidence extending from the Aegean embayments into the interior have made it hospitable equally to the moist sea

winds and to oversea peoples. The relief is extremely varied. Old folded mountains in the north and south and the Lydian crystalline mass in the middle have all been modified by elevations and subsidences, overlaid in the north and middle by Tertiary deposits and volcanic outflows, and subjected to various degrees of erosion according to the rainfall. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with a summer drought lasting three months in the north and six months in the south. The rainfall, which is 653 millimeters at Smyrna, declines gradually from the coast inland; it is 500 millimeters sixty miles from the sea.

Mysia, exposed to the Pontic rains, has a very dissected relief, which has proved an obstacle to communication and cultural development. The rains nourish large forests of pine, oak, and beech, extending from the coast far into the interior. The late Tertiary deposits provide in general fertile soils; but, owing to difficult communication, the agricultural districts are small and scattered, except in the plain of Pergamum, where the Caicus valley opens a highway from the coast. There the alluvium produces various crops, while the bordering slopes are planted in orchards and vineyards. Lydia, with its ample Tertiary deposits, fertile volcanic soils, and adequate rains, is the land of tillage. Its abundant harbors and long subsidence valleys make it also a land of traffic routes between coast and interior and explain the big export trade of Smyrna. Caria has an infertile soil which neutralizes the advantages of its embayed coast. Only the Meander valley forms a belt of alluvium which flanks the crystalline mountains to the south and produces grains, hemp, cotton, and tobacco. Where the alluvium meets the crystalline rim of the valley are the famous "Smyrna fig" plantations.

#### SOUTHERN ANATOLIA

This region is traversed by the folded ranges of the Taurus system which extends in a shallow crescent from the Anti-Taurus to central Phrygia. The mountains intercept the rain-bearing winds from the Levantine Sea and therefore have abundant forests on their seaward slopes; but the inner flanks support only pasturage and irrigated patches of tillage land. The climate is typically Mediterranean along the coast; the five months of summer drought is broken only by occasional cloud-bursts. In Lycia the mountains rise directly from the sea. The rugged coast is broken at intervals by little deltaic flats at the heads of protected bays, where population concentrates and cultivates plantations of subtropical fruits. Pamphylia embraces the narrow coastal plain at the head of the Gulf of Adalia. Its villages and farms are distributed along the inner piedmont border, which combines good drainage, fertile soil, and ample irrigation streams for the cultivation of cotton, sugar cane, and various southern fruit plantations. Near the sea a broad zone of swamps and lagoons repels settlement but attracts the Yuruk nomads who pasture their herds in the marsh meadows. The hinterland, Pisidia, is a densely forested mountain region cut by long,

gorgelike valleys which admit the rain-bearing winds far into the interior and open above into the high lake region of Isauria.

### CILICIA

This region comprises the big subsidence plain at the head of the Gulf of Mersina, together with the vast semicircular rampart of mountains which enclose both plain and gulf. Located at the inner angle of the Levantine Sea, Cilicia forms a transit land between Anatolia and Syria. It shares in the history and culture of both countries, despite the multiple ranges which enclose it on three sides. These folded ranges, lofty and well forested on their seaward slopes, rise to plateau-like summits in the interior, where reduced rainfall and steppe vegetation restrict tillage but encourage pastoral nomadism. The northern half of the Cilician lowland has been reduced to a peneplain, only 250 feet above the sea, by the erosive action of the streams of the Anti-Taurus. The surface shows a thin sheet of humus overlying a coarse conglomerate. The climate is hot and semiarid, while the deeply incised streams are not available for irrigation. Nomad stock raising prevails here. In contrast, the southern half consists of a fertile alluvial plain built up in a shallow bay and abundantly supplied with typical deltaic streams available for irrigation. It is planted with a great variety of subtropical crops and its well drained portions are sprinkled with towns and villages. The low swampy coast is still unoccupied. The Cilician plain, which was a famous district of production in early Greek and Roman times, has recently been recolonized by Egyptian, Syrian, Cretan, Bulgarian, and Circassian peasants, who have brought 1,000 to 1,200 square miles of its fertile soil under cultivation and dislodged the old Turkish population. The northern or piedmont zone is also in large part arable, but its development must wait for railroads and colonists.

### Armenia

Armenia is a high plateau (5,200 to 6,000 feet) located behind the lofty Lazistan ranges and almost barred alike from the rains and the cultural influences emanating from the Black Sea. It is bordered on the south by the Armenian Taurus, which greatly impedes communication with the Mesopotamian plains. It is crossed, east and west, by folds of the Anti-Taurus and Zagros Mountains, which have been disturbed by recent volcanic upheavals and overlaid by vast lava flows, so that the relief of the country is extremely complex. Its valleys are blocked on the east by lofty ranges, whose passes are snow-bound eight months in the year, and they open westward upon high and arid plateaus which form an inhospitable transit land to Anatolia. Armenia is a natural stronghold, giving its possessor a grip upon the surrounding countries. It has always been an object of conquest for neighboring states who wanted it for a border fortress against aggression.

The climate of Armenia is distinguished by the severe snowy winters, which, owing to the altitude, last for six to eight months. Precipitation is confined to winter and spring, except in the extreme north, where the Pontic winds bring occasional summer showers to the plain of Erzerum (6,200 feet). The annual rainfall is 800 to 600 millimeters in the high eastern portion but sinks westward with declining altitude to 500 millimeters and beyond the Euphrates drops to 350 millimeters. Armenia is pre-eminently a steppe land, because the short summer period warm enough for plant growth is arid both on the mountains and in the valleys. The forests, which are scant and few, are practically confined to the valleys, because the protracted cold and the violent winds of the mountains prevent their growth. Therefore pasture lands are widespread, nomad stock raising prevails, and tillage areas are insignificant except in a few lacustrine expansions of the longitudinal valleys.

#### THE INTERIOR PLATEAU (INNER ARMENIA)

This plateau region, despite its elevation, is a subsidence area in relation to the high mountains on its northern and southern borders. Offshoots of the Anti-Taurus folds defining its northern boundary rise to 8,000 or 10,000 feet; they offer, however, fairly easy passes by which the thinly strung villages of the valley of the Frat Su (northern branch of the Euphrates), especially the cities of Erzingan and Erzerum, maintain connection with the plateau towns of eastern Pontus and Russian Armenia and through these with the Black Sea ports.

South of the Frat Su runs the great divide of Armenia which separates this longitudinal valley from the Murad Su. It is a lofty folded system, overlaid in the south and east by volcanic deposits which everywhere level up the inequalities to wide plateau surfaces. Its steep northern front marks the southern limit of the Pontic winds and the northern limit of the Kurds. Its long southern slope is semiarid, covered with sparse summer pastures and affording small lacustrine basins utilized for agriculture. It comprises Dersim, an isolated mountain country north of Kharput, which maintained its independence till 1908; the high level plateau of Bingöl Dagh, inhabited by pastoral Kurds and Armenian villagers, the latter forming one-third of the total population; the Lake Van province, cradle of the Armenian folk, who in this province alone form a majority of the population; and finally the upper Murad province, through which runs the old caravan track from Tabriz to Erzerum, traversing a lacustrine trough along the base of the Aghri Dagh frontier range.

West of the Euphrates the mountain structure of Armenia extends with diminished relief into an undulating plateau which rises westward to the Cappadocian frontier. Its steppes are grazed by the cattle, sheep, and goats of Kurdish and Turcoman nomads. Its few villages are occupied by Turks and sedentary Turcomans.

### SOUTHERN ARMENIA

This region comprises the broad belt of folded mountains, formed by the Armenian Taurus and Zagros systems, which separate Inner Armenia from the Mesopotamian depression. This barrier, readily crossed at few points, marks the limit of Semitic expansion from the southern plains; but the peoples of the plateau interior, both Kurds and Armenians, have easily descended through the passes to the fertile Mesopotamian piedmont and there exploited its pastoral and agricultural possibilities.

The Commagene province west of the Euphrates consists of a high plateau core flanked north and south by narrow mountain folds. Its rivers flow through deeply cut transverse valleys to the Euphrates. Steppe vegetation appears after the scant spring rains. Tillage is practically confined to the valleys and base of the mountains, where the Malatia and Marash valleys are centers of dense population and varied agriculture.

The Armenian Taurus, rising steeply from the Murad Su, sends most of its drainage southward. Owing to scant rainfall the slopes are bare or dotted with clumps of dwarf oak. At the southern openings of the narrow valleys are intermittent groups of settlements with small terraced and irrigated fields. Near the lower Murad Su, just above its confluence with the Euphrates, is a productive agricultural plain which supports Kharput and Mesere. South of Lake Van the Taurus meets the yet higher and broader Zagros folds. Thin oak forests dot the slopes up to 6,000 feet. This is a wild, almost impenetrable country inhabited by independent Kurdish tribes who combine a little terrace agriculture with extensive nomadic stock raising.

### Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia is a large subsidence basin, surrounded by the Armenian Taurus on the north, the Zagros on the east, and the Syro-Arabian plateau on the west. It slopes from the Tauric piedmont at 3,000 feet down to the Persian Gulf; two-thirds of its area lies below the 1,000-foot contour line. The deltaic lowland of Babylonia, extending from the sea to the inner edge of the alluvium at 300 feet elevation, presents a sharp contrast to upland Mesopotamia, which rests upon a rock foundation. Upland Mesopotamia falls into three natural regions, distinguished from each other by geological structure, relief, and rainfall.

The annual precipitation, which is confined to winter, is meager. Below the 1,000-foot contour it nowhere exceeds 250 millimeters, but it increases to 390 millimeters at Urfa at 1,600 feet and to 490 millimeters at Diarbekr in the Tauric piedmont at 2,035 feet. In the northern piedmont districts rains fall during several months and suffice for winter crops of grain, but drought destroys the harvest every four or five years. Elsewhere irrigation is imperative for all tillage.

### NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

This region embraces the northern upland and piedmont; it is defined on the south by a line connecting Mosul on the Tigris with Membidj on the Euphrates, which may be taken as the boundary of the well-watered area. The region comprises several subregions. The Upper Tigris district, a Miocene plateau overlaid with basaltic lava, stretches from the foothills of the Taurus on the north to the volcanic mass of the Karadja Dagh on the southwest and the bold scarp of the limestone plateau of Tur Abdin on the south. It has a moderate rainfall (500 to 600 mm.), which is protracted into April, and abundant streams which irrigate fields of rice and cotton, besides extensive orchards, vineyards, and gardens. Agricultural villages are scattered fairly evenly over the district. Cities like Diarbekr and Sert owe their prosperity to their location on important traffic routes, rather than to local production. The Karadja Dagh massif (6,068 feet) and the Tur Abdin plateau (3,300 feet) offer little inducement to tillage, but their reservoirs of winter snow feed the abundant springs and streams which flow southward to form the Khabur River and which irrigate a belt of gardens, orchards, vineyards, and fields stretching along the alluvial piedmont plain. Farther west a limestone subregion of block mountains, 2,400 or 2,700 feet in altitude, gives rise to the Balikh River, whose troughlike valleys support a varied agriculture and a dense population.

Beyond the southward reach of these streams steppe vegetation and Arab nomads hold sway. To the southeast, however, the long, detached range of the Sindjar Mountains rises high enough (4,600 feet is the culminating height) to extract some moisture from the clouds and to support irrigated oases along its base and good pastures on its slopes. This climatic island is the asylum of the semipagan Yezidis.

The population of Northern Mesopotamia consists of Kurds, mingled with intrusive Armenians along the highland border of the region and with sedentary or nomadic Arabs along the southern margin.

### CENTRAL MESOPOTAMIA, OR EL DJESIREH

This region lies between the northern piedmont and the Babylonian lowland and is distinguished from both of them by its pronounced steppe character and its meager area fit for tillage. Cultivation is restricted to small patches scattered along the valley floor of the Euphrates and its two tributaries, the Khabur and Balikh. The whole region is a flat, arid plain whose vegetation, green only in spring, becomes sparser and shorter-lived from north to south. Shammar Arabs pasture their herds of sheep, camels and horses over the steppe and market their wool products in the border towns of Aleppo, Baghdad, and Mosul.

### EASTERN MESOPOTAMIA

Eastern Mesopotamia embraces the terraced foreland of the Zagros, crossed by spurs and seamed by snow-fed rivers from the ranges behind.

Tillage land and irrigation streams lie side by side, but their economic development is jeopardized by the raids of mountain Kurds and Arab nomads. The northern province, Assyria, gets enough rain for winter grain crops but applies irrigation to its orchards and gardens. Farms and villages are densely distributed over the triangle between the Tigris and the southern watershed of the Great Zab. This province is the focus of roads leading in all directions—a fact which explains the prosperity of ancient Nineveh and modern Mosul.

The southern foreland, extending from the Great Zab basin to the Diala, is distinguished from the northern province by its greater breadth, its warmer and far drier climate, its predominant steppe area, the necessity of irrigation for all tillage, and the equal division of the country between Kurds in the eastern part and Arabs in the western. Settlements and farms stretch in a narrow belt between two chains of foot hills. Abundant petroleum wells promise wealth in the future.

#### SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA, OR BABYLONIA

This region occupies the broad alluvial depression between the foothills of the southern Zagros and the escarpment of the northern Arabian plateau. The soil consists of gravel and sand overlaid with clay, marl, and mud. The level surface and the shallow beds of the rivers which offer conditions for irrigation also permit widespread inundations. About two-thirds of the whole area is under water in the flood season from March to August; an equal amount is dry from October to February.

Northern Babylonia occupies the head of the deltaic lowland. This location, relatively high, insures good town sites and fair drainage while it admits few permanent swamps. The largest tillage district lies between the Tigris and Diala and is watered by canals from the mountain stream. It raises grains, fruits, tobacco, cotton, sesame, rice, and dates. Baghdad, located at the focus of various caravan routes and at the head of steamer navigation on the Tigris, relies both on its trade and its local production. Western Babylonia, divided between swamps and tillage land, has many small villages and several towns along the arms and canals of the Euphrates. In lower Babylonia, a region of widespread swamp, steppe, and saline desert, agriculture is negligible, except in the Shatt-el-Arab district, which forms a band of palm oases along the river and produces the finest dates in the world. These are exported in vast quantities through Basra, the river seaport on the Shatt.

#### Northeastern and Northern Arabia

The Turkish border region of eastern Arabia forms a transition zone between the plateau interior and the Persian Gulf-Mesopotamian depression. It is an arid steppe inhabited by independent Bedouin tribes, over whom the Porte exercised a shadowy authority definitely overthrown by Ibn Saud of

the southern Nedjd in 1913. The low coast land of El Hasa is supplied with abundant ground water, which drains down from the interior and in many places is reached by shallow wells. Date culture and pearl fisheries form the chief occupation of the people. Persian influences, both ethnic and religious, have permeated the region from the opposite coast.

### Syria

Syria comprises the belt of fairly well-watered highlands, located between the Mediterranean and arid Arabia. The grain of the highlands runs north and south and shows four parallel bands of relief and climate: (1) a belt of block mountains or plateaus along the coast, with moderate or ample rainfall according to altitude and location; (2) a long middle rift valley with meager rainfall; (3) an inner highland accessible on its western slope to the rain-bearing winds; (4) a semiarid plateau hinterland. These successive belts of relief and climate appear in the four maritime geographical regions of Syria, which are therefore fundamentally similar, though differentiated in various minor features. The corrugated relief would make Syria a long-drawn barrier were it not for several transverse subsidence troughs which open passways from the coast to the interior. The rainfall, though variable in amount, is everywhere confined to winter. The summer drought is long.

#### NORTHERN SYRIA

This region is characterized by a relatively low relief wherein the feature of twin highlands and rift valley is scarcely apparent. The surface is an undulating plateau, adapted to agriculture in the north, owing to the Orontes break in the coast range which admits the rains from the Mediterranean into the interior and gives Aintab an annual precipitation of 560 millimeters. The southern portion has irrigated tillage strips along the streams flowing down from the Kurd Dagh, with grazing land in the inter-fluvial spaces. Low relief and ready access to the coast make this region a natural transit land between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates.

#### STEPPE SYRIA

The coast range of Steppe Syria is a dissected horst, rising from the coast in natural terraces which afford excellent conditions for agriculture and sinking steeply to the rift on the east. This valley, drained by the Orontes River, spreads out into cultivated plains about Homs and Hama but narrows sharply towards the north. The eastern mountain range is here supplanted by a dissected plateau too low to cause rain. Therefore tillage is confined to the western part of the region, and the steppe hinterland is correspondingly expanded.

#### CENTRAL SYRIA

Central Syria consists of the Lebanon Mountains and their hinterland. The region is distinguished by the possession of several mediocre ports; by

the high altitude of both the eastern and western block mountains; by the considerable elevation of the rift valley, which is 3,600 feet at its highest point; and by a rainfall which is heavy on the Mediterranean slope of the Lebanon, considerable in the rift valley and on the western side of the Anti-Lebanon and Hermon, but which suddenly ceases in the rain shadow of this high eastern barrier. Hence tillage, which flourishes to the westward, stops short east of the Anti-Lebanon and Hermon, except where the drainage streams from these create the Damascus oasis in the interior. The coastal belt produces various subtropical fruits, tobacco, cotton, and mulberry trees for sericulture. The Lebanon trough raises grain, mulberry, and olive trees, while gardens, vineyards, and orchards dot the western slope of Mt. Hermon and Anti-Lebanon up to 5,200 feet.

#### PALESTINE, OR SOUTHERN SYRIA

This region is distinguished from the preceding by the presence of a narrow coastal plain, which is totally lacking in safe harbors; by the lower elevation and plateau form of its eastern and western highlands; and especially by the depression of the rift valley below sea level. Lower elevation, combined with a southern location and proximity to the Arabian Desert, makes Palestine the driest region of Syria.

The western highlands get from 500 to 650 millimeters of rain, which suffices for various winter crops, for olives, and for vineyards. The maritime plain, with only 200 to 400 millimeters of rain, depends upon irrigation; it finds the necessary water in the abundant springs which burst forth at the base of the Judean limestone plateau and in the high ground-water table in the plains of Sharon and Philistia, which is reached by shallow wells. The Jordan valley has a meager rainfall from 400 millimeters in the north to 200 millimeters in the south. The waters of the Jordan itself flow in too deep-sunk a bed to be generally available for irrigation, but patches of land on the old Jordan Lake strands are irrigated from springs and wadis. The eastern highland, with a moderate rainfall (400–600 mm.) only in the northern or Golan district, combines limited tillage with stock raising, sedentary with nomad life, in the Ammon and Moab districts.

#### HAURAN

Hauran is an inland plateau region located between Mt. Hermon and the elongated volcanic mass of Mt. Hauran (5,200 feet), whose streams irrigate a broad belt of fertile country at their base, converting an arid district into the granary and garden of Syria. The Damascene, or Damascus district, occupies a terrace at the eastern base of Anti-Lebanon covered with alluvial deposits and watered by canals from the Barada and Awaj Rivers. It supports eighty villages, with their orchards and gardens, several towns, and the city of Damascus—a border market of the Syrian Desert and focus of

many roads. Southward from Damascus extends the fertile lava plateau of Nukra, or Bashan, watered by ample streams and producing excellent crops of wheat and tobacco on the rich volcanic soil which covers the underlying limestone.

### Western Arabia

Syria links Anatolia with the Holy Land of Islam. Western Arabia comprises a belt of territory about 140 miles wide, extending for 1,300 miles along the Red Sea coast, the terraced escarpment, and high rim of the Arabian Plateau. Its profile is everywhere the same—coral reefs and coral strand at the foot of white cliffs; then a strip of desert plain with an occasional group of palms growing at a wadi mouth; beyond this, walls of rock rising in terraces to the plateau rim, 6,000 feet high or more and loftier in the south than in the north. Despite this nearly identical relief, Western Arabia forms two distinct geographical regions, sharply differentiated by their rainfall.

The northern, or subtropical region, includes Midia, Hedjaz, and Asir. Its rainfall, which is confined to winter, is very variable and probably less than 200 millimeters a year. The region is steppe or semidesert given over to pastoral nomadism supplemented by a little irrigation tillage in the scattered oases. The Hedjaz, with its sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, imports all the food consumed by its crowds of pilgrims. Asir, the southern province, located on the margin of the tropical rain belt, has numerous and even extensive oases watered by full winter streams. It raises enough wheat, barley, grapes, and various fruits for its own needs, with a slight margin over for export.

Tropical Arabia, or Yemen, Arabia Felix of the ancients, lies in the belt of the summer monsoons and, by reason of its lofty mountains, which, south of the 14th parallel, are 10,000 feet high, receives 600 to 1,000 millimeters of rain. Precipitation decreases northward, however, and at the 18th parallel is only 250 millimeters. The rains last from May to September. Agriculture is the basis of the economic life. The steep slopes have been terraced for gardens and orchards, fields and vineyards, up to 6,000 feet. Barley, rye, almonds, figs, peaches, apricots, apples, pears, bananas, lemons, plums, and walnuts thrive nearly everywhere. The coastal plains and piedmont produce dates, sesame, cotton, and indigo. Higher up grow wheat, tobacco, and especially coffee. The climatic zones of altitude give rise to active domestic exchanges. The export trade, which is inconsiderable, goes out through Hodeida and Aden.

Behind the rain screen of the mountains in both tropical and subtropical Arabia the picture is the same: a bare plateau, watered by rare winter showers, harbors a few villages in its scattered oases, while Bedouins set up their black tents in the widespread steppe desert. The southern Nedjd with its desert stretches broken by groups of oases in the upland belt of the Tuwaik has been described in the preceding article.

## CLASSIFICATION OF THE NATURAL REGIONS OF ASIATIC TURKEY (AFTER BANSE)

**Asia Minor (Anatolia)****MARMARA PROVINCE**

Thrace  
The Troad  
Lesser Phrygia  
Bithynia

**NORTHERN ANATOLIA**

Paphlagonia  
Eastern Pontus

**INNER ANATOLIA**

Cappadocia  
Lycaonia  
Galatia  
Phrygia

**WESTERN ANATOLIA**

Mysia  
Lydia

**SOUTHERN ANATOLIA**

Lycia  
Pamphylia  
Pisidia  
Isauria  
Highland Cilicia  
Cilician Taurus  
Lowland Cilicia  
Amanus Range  
Anti-Taurus

Cilicia

**Armenia****INNER ARMENIA**

Middle Euphrates District  
Erzerum District (transitional)  
Upper Murad District  
Lake Van District  
Bingöl District  
Dersim  
Western District (transitional)

**SOUTHERN ARMENIA**

Commagene Taurus  
Armenian Taurus  
Zagros Mountains

**Mesopotamia****NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA**

Upper Tigris District  
Karadja District  
Tur Abdin  
Khabur Headwaters District  
Djebel Sindjar  
Northwestern Limestone District

**CENTRAL MESOPOTAMIA (EL Djesireh)****EASTERN MESOPOTAMIA**

Assyria  
Eastern Scarp District

**SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA (BABYLONIA)**

Northern Babylonia  
Western Babylonia  
Central and Eastern Babylonia  
Delta District

**Syria****NORTHERN SYRIA**

Aleppo Plains  
Kurd Mountains  
Kara Su Trough  
Northern Gateway

**STEPPE SYRIA**

Hinterland  
Eastern Border Mountains  
Orontes Valley  
Ansariyah Mountains  
Nahr-el-Kebir Gateway

**CENTRAL SYRIA**

Phoenicia  
Lebanon  
El Bikāā  
Anti-Lebanon  
Hinterland

**HAURAN PROVINCE**

The Damascene  
Eastern Basalt District  
The Hauran  
The Ledja  
Nukra Plain

**PALESTINE (SOUTHERN SYRIA)**

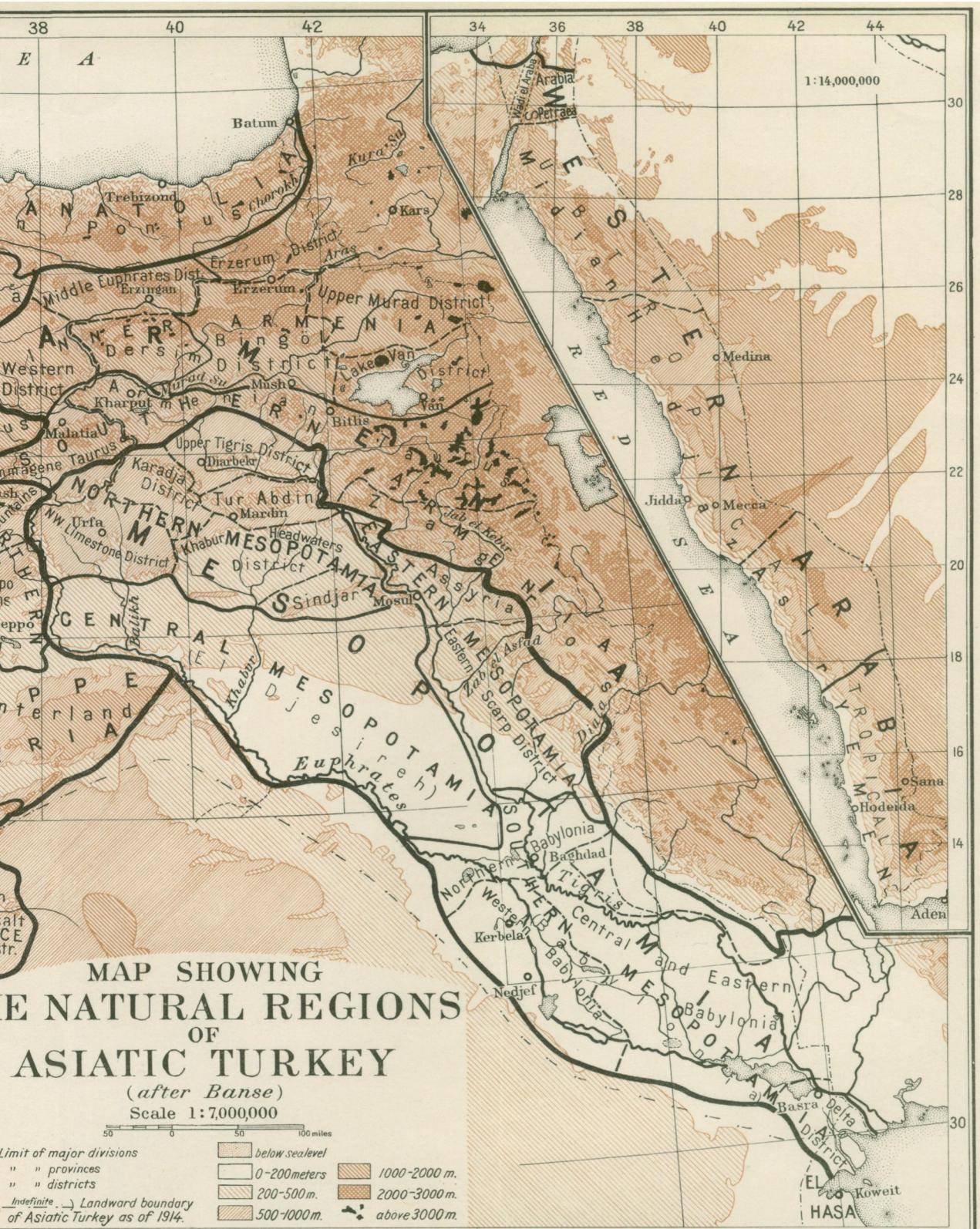
East Jordan Land  
Golan  
Gilead  
Ammon  
Moab  
El Ghor  
West Jordan Land  
Galilee  
Samaria  
Judea  
Coastal Plain

**Northeastern and Northern Arabia****EL HASA****NORTHERN ARABIA****Western Arabia**

**SUBTROPICAL**  
Wadi el Araba  
Arabia Petraea  
Midian  
Hedjaz  
Asir

**TROPICAL (YEMEN)**





MAP SHOWING  
THE NATURAL REGIONS  
OF  
ASIATIC TURKEY

(after Banse)

Scale 1:7,000,000

### *Limit of major divisions*

" " provinces

" " district

Indefinite → Landward boundary  
of Asiatic Turkey as of 1914.

	below sea level
	0-200 meters
	200-500 m.
	500-1000 m.
	1000-2000 m.
	2000-3000 m.
	above 3000 m.